



Proposed Collection; Comment Request

Extension: Rule 19a-1

Notice is hereby given that, pursuant to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (44 U.S.C. 3501-3520), the Securities and Exchange Commission (the “Commission”) is soliciting comments on the collection of information summarized below. The Commission plans to submit this existing collection of information to the Office of Management and Budget for extension and approval.

Section 19(a) (15 U.S.C. 80a-19(a)) of the Investment Company Act of 1940 (the “Act”) (15 U.S.C. 80a) makes it unlawful for any registered investment company to pay any dividend or similar distribution from any source other than the company’s net income, unless the payment is accompanied by a written statement to the company’s shareholders which adequately discloses the sources of the payment. Section 19(a) authorizes the Commission to prescribe the form of such statement by rule.

Rule 19a-1 (17 CFR 270.19a-1) under the Act, entitled “Written Statement to Accompany Dividend Payments by Management Companies,” sets forth specific requirements for the information that must be included in statements made pursuant to section 19(a) by or on behalf of management companies.¹ The rule requires that the statement indicate what portions of distribution payments are made from net income, net profits from the sale of a security or other property (“capital gains”) and paid-in capital. When any part of the payment is made from capital gains, rule 19a-1 also requires that the statement disclose certain other information

¹ Section 4(3) of the Act (15 U.S. C. 80a-4(3)) defines “management company” as “any investment company other than a face amount certificate company or a unit investment trust.”

relating to the appreciation or depreciation of portfolio securities. If an estimated portion is subsequently determined to be significantly inaccurate, a correction must be made on a statement made pursuant to section 19(a) or in the first report to shareholders following the discovery of the inaccuracy.

The purpose of rule 19a-1 is to afford fund shareholders adequate disclosure of the sources from which distribution payments are made. The rule is intended to prevent shareholders from confusing income dividends with distributions made from capital sources. Absent rule 19a-1, shareholders might receive a false impression of fund gains.

Based on a review of filings made with the Commission, the staff estimates that approximately 12,019 series of registered investment companies that are management companies may be subject to rule 19a-1 each year,² and that each portfolio on average mails two statements per year to meet the requirements of the rule.³ The staff further estimates that the time needed to make the determinations required by the rule and to prepare the statement required under the rule is approximately 1 hour per statement. The total annual burden for all portfolios therefore is estimated to be approximately 24,038 burden hours.⁴

The staff estimates that approximately one-third of the total annual burden (8,013 hours) would be incurred by a paralegal with an average hourly wage rate of approximately \$219 per hour,⁵

² This estimate is based on statistics compiled by Commission staff as of September 21, 2020. The number of management investment company portfolios that make distributions for which compliance with rule 19a-1 is required depends on a wide range of factors and can vary greatly across years. Therefore, the calculation of estimated burden hours is based on the total number of management investment company portfolios, each of which may be subject to rule 19a-1.

³ A few portfolios make monthly distributions from sources other than net income, so the rule requires them to send out a statement 12 times a year. Other portfolios never make such distributions.

⁴ This estimate is based on the following calculation: 12,019 management investment company portfolios x 2 statements per year x 1 hour per statement = burden hours.

⁵ Hourly rates are derived from the Securities Industry and Financial Markets Association (“SIFMA”), Management and Professional Earnings in the Securities Industry 2013, modified to account for an 1800-hour work-year and inflation, and multiplied by 5.35 to account for bonuses, firm size, employee benefits, and overhead.

and approximately two-thirds of the annual burden (16,026 hours) would be incurred by a compliance clerk with an average hourly wage rate of \$71 per hour.⁶ The staff therefore estimates that the aggregate annual cost of complying with the paperwork requirements of the rule is approximately \$2,892,693 ((8,013 hours x \$219 = \$1,754,847) + (16,026 hours x \$71 = \$1,137,846)).

To comply with state law, many investment companies already must distinguish the different sources from which a shareholder distribution is paid and disclose that information to shareholders. Thus, many investment companies would be required to distinguish the sources of shareholder dividends whether or not the Commission required them to do so under rule 19a-1.

The estimate of average burden hours is made solely for the purposes of the Paperwork Reduction Act, and is not derived from a comprehensive or even a representative survey or study of the costs of Commission rules. Compliance with the collection of information required by rule 19a-1 is mandatory for management companies that make statements to shareholders pursuant to section 19(a) of the Act. An agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to, a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid control number.

Written comments are invited on: (a) whether the collections of information are necessary for the proper performance of the functions of the Commission, including whether the information has practical utility; (b) the accuracy of the Commission's estimate of the burdens of the collections of information; (c) ways to enhance the quality, utility, and clarity of the information collected; and (d) ways to minimize the burdens of the collections of information on respondents, including through the use of automated collection techniques or other forms of

⁶ Hourly rates are derived from SIFMA's Office Salaries in the Securities Industry 2013, modified to account for an 1800-hour work-year and multiplied by 2.93 to account for bonuses, firm size, employee benefits and overhead.

information technology. Consideration will be given to comments and suggestions submitted in writing within 60 days of this publication.

Please direct your written comments to David Bottom, Director/Chief Information Officer, Securities and Exchange Commission, C/O Cynthia Roscoe, 100 F Street, NE, Washington, DC 20549; or send an email to: PRA_Mailbox@sec.gov.

Dated: November 18, 2020.

J. Matthew DeLesDernier,
Assistant Secretary.

[FR Doc. 2020-25896 Filed: 11/23/2020 8:45 am; Publication Date: 11/24/2020]